



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of December 3, 2008
2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC
Plaza Level Conference Room
Melvin Municipal Office Building

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Robbie Perkins	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Mike Winstead	<i>Guilford County Commissioner</i>
Yvonne Johnson	<i>City of Greensboro Mayor</i>		
Kirk Perkins	<i>Guilford County Commissioner</i>		

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Frances Gallagher	<i>Capital Management & Engineering</i>
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT Acting Director</i>	Brent McKinney	<i>PART</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Ted Kallan	<i>Council of Governments</i>
Peggy Holland	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Taft Wireback	<i>News & Record</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Brenda Gladson	<i>King's Mill resident</i>
Kelly Larkins	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Steve Gladson	<i>King's Mill resident</i>
Kyla Purtell	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Sandy Carmany	<i>Town of Pleasant Garden</i>
Brad Wall	<i>NCDOT</i>	Ted Patrick	<i>Greensboro Engineering and Inspections</i>

Robbie Perkins called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Action Items

I. Approve Minutes of October 23, 2008

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. Yvonne Johnson seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2008 meeting.

2. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns

None

3. Citizen Comments

Perkins asked NCDOT staff to give update on urban loop related issues. They included the urban loop resigning; the status on the plant buffering; what agency controls the speed limit on the loop; and status on the causes for the defects in the King's Mill houses adjacent to the urban loop.

Brad Wall gave an update on behalf of NCDOT.

Wall noted the planting contract had been let, awarded, and should start soon. The contractor has begun purchasing plants. Completion of that corresponds with the planting season around March and April.

Overhead signs switch for Interstate 40 is underway. Some of the signs have been changed on the east-side and the west-side will begin shortly. Then will switch the signs for the remaining roads.

The speed limit issue will be handled by NCDOT traffic engineers and will inform Mike Mills of the concerns.

Wall noted that Mills have been talking with the right-of-way people and moving ahead with some of the repairs but did not have any specific details.

Robbie Perkins asked who actually had the control over the speed limits.

Wall noted that the division traffic staff and central traffic staff in Raleigh would be involved and the Federal Highway Administration might also have some input.

Robbie Perkins recommended that the process get laid out and explained to the citizens. The current need is for clear understanding of the process. He further recommended NCDOT supply a white paper outlining the process steps for changing the speed limit and an explanation for how the speed limits are determine. It was also recommended to get information to Mr. Frazier and out to the public possible through the newspaper.

Robbie Perkins noted that is unfortunate that Mr. Galyon was not able to make it to his last MPO meeting and acknowledged the tremendous job he has done in Greensboro, Guilford County, and the state.

Robbie Perkins then asked for citizen concerns.

Brenda Gladson noted that at the last meeting they were told they were to get a report from the engineer about the damages. In addition they also received a report from a licensed home inspector. The report from the DOT did not show the cracks in the foundation and did not show all of the truss damage. Differences between the DOT report and the one conducted by the home inspector. One of the recommendation is to place sound meters out near the house. The vibrations from the loop cause the windows in the house to shake. She noted that she still have not heard about what the resolution about what DOT is going to do about the structural damage to these properties. The house is showing cracks now in the foundation.

Gladson acknowledged that the controversy is who is liable for the damages, but noted that she had a document by the DOT indicating that prior to January 2005 damages were not present. She also has emails from DOT officials that contained information that officials knew that structural damages were already occurring to the structure. She further noted that now NCDOT says they do not have enough data to determine that the damage to the property was caused by the project.

Robbie Perkins confirmed that this was property the Gladson's bought from NCDOT.

Brenda Gladson confirmed and noted that they were told that the project would be a four lane and tree lined boulevard with a minimum distance of 100 feet. The actual distance away is 14 feet. The project now has developed into an eight land major highway. Gladson asked what the DOT intentions are because she was not seeing any action about this.

Robbie Perkins noted the message to NCDOT was that the process is not moving fast enough and that there needs to be some type of resolution. Time will only make people more upset.

Gladson noted that the inspectors hired by NCDOT noticed several places structural damages that were not there earlier. They were also told by the home inspector they hired that the damages to the house were going to continue to get worse due to the vibration. A nearby bridge is amplifying the vibrations.

Steve Gladson noted NCDOT stated no traffic counts would be done. Estimates 100,000 or more vehicles per day. According to environmental impact statement states road design for 4% trucks, but estimates 15% to 20% of the total traffic. Noted traffic bottleneck between Alamance Church Road and US 421 between 3 and 6pm. Believes 20,000 vehicles per day on that segment and noted traffic noise has increased. The lack of trees due to the fall season have also contributed to an increase in sound levels. Gladson noted clear communication is a major issue and the opening of FedEx would have a further impact on the loop.

Robbie Perkins noted the consensus was to move forward to a resolution.

4. Safe Route to Schools

Peggy Holland announced the city will be submitting an application for an Infrastructure Grant Reimbursement Program through NCDOT. This application is due no later than January 30th, 2009 but will submit it mid January. The Safe Routes to Schools Program is a Federal program for areas within two miles of K-8 schools to encourage safe walking and bicycling. This money is 100% Federal money and a local match is not required. The projects for this particular grant should range between \$100,000 and \$300,000. This application is for Spry Street that is to the south of Rankin Elementary on the corner of Spry and Rankin. Sidewalk is only at the school. Spry is a collector and is heavily used by children to get to school. This project is 5,250 feet in total length with 10 wheelchair ramps with an engineering estimate of \$288,750. There is existing sidewalk but this construction will complete sidewalks on Spry Street between Summit Avenue and Yanceyville Street. This area was formally a target school for a Safe Guilford program called Walk This Way. The neighborhood also petition for sidewalk a few years ago. The school has approximately 600 children.

Yvonne Johnson moved for approval. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution supporting the Safe Routes to Schools application.

5. Modify 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program- GTA Project

Meyer noted this modification related to GTA bus purchases that originally were included in fiscal year 2007 in the last MTIP. GTA is at a point to apply for the funds. A new MTIP has been approved for 2009-2015, therefore the projects need to be reflected in the new MTIP. This amendment will add projects in 2009 to the current MTIP and reflect these bus purchases. The amendment includes nine replacement small buses, three expansion small buses, one replacement of a large bus, and one expansion large bus.

Johnson inquired if hybrid buses were being used.

Fischer noted that the buses were on ordered. The city wanted to try one out first because they are going to be more expensive than a typical bus.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval. Yvonne Johnson seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the GTA amendment to the MTIP.

6. STP DA Recommendation and MTIP Amendment

Meyer noted for the STP DA recommendations which follows the priority needs list that has been mentioned in previous meetings and was finally adopted at the last meeting. This follows a string of actions going back five to six years from the MPO working with the NCDOT to direct funds from the surface transportation program that are direct apportioned funds for the Greensboro urban area. The program allows the MPO and NCDOT to work together to meet the key local needs to be implemented at cost effective and timely fashion. The MPO has a list of recommendations based on the 2011-2017 Priority Needs List that are based on a review of status and project development based on their readiness for implementation and the opportunities to maximize the value of the investment that includes leveraging both local and federal funding and being able to deliver in the short term. These funds need to be delivered as soon as possible so they can be used. There is a \$15.2 million dollar investment with this action.

The first is the GTA Bus Operations, Maintenance, and Administration facility which was at the top of the priority needs list. This is due to the current facility being too small for their growing fleet which leads to operational and maintenance inefficiencies. GTA has identified the site, purchased it, and the design for the facility should be complete within a year. What is needed with this package is to put STP DA funding towards it. The total project cost is estimated at \$20 million and with other funding already received a remaining \$13.3 million is needed. It is recommended to apply \$10 million STP DA funding which would require an additional \$2.5 million match. This would close the funding gap but also make this project attractive to the congressional earmarks in the future or through the investment of other STP DA funds or CMAQ funds in the future. This funding would cover a substantial amount of the construction cost.

Meyer noted the next project recommendation is sidewalk projects. Sidewalk projects ready for construction in fiscal year 2010 totaling 18.5 miles. These are major projects on major roadways with 4.8 miles of sidewalk on East Wendover, 5 miles on Market Street, 3 miles on East Florida Street, about 1.6 miles on Randleman Road, 1 mile on Lawndale, a little less than a mile on South Holden Road, and about 2/3 of a mile on Pembroke. These projects will enhance access to transit and overall improve pedestrian safety and walkability in these areas. These projects would allow for short term completion with the designs almost completed and a small amount of right-of-way needed to be acquired. The recommendation is for adding a \$4.8 million in STP DA funding to require a \$1.2 million local match for fiscal year 2010. \$300,000 would be for the right-of-way cost, but an additional \$900,000 in local match would be needed by 2010.

Fischer noted the \$15 million bond funds currently available include money for the match.

Meyer noted the third recommendation as involving PART expansion plans. Recently the PART board approved the purchase of six expansion buses and they asked each MPO what they could do to add buses to this order so that PART could better expand its service. Greensboro was asked to provide enough funding for one bus. The recommendation is to provide enough funding for one PART bus. The funding would be up to \$375,000 in STP DA funding with the local match provided by PART.

The final recommendation involves the Battleground Rail Trail Phase 2 which begins in downtown and ends at south of the Lawndale Shopping Center. This was added to the TIP (1 year or 2 years ago) for 2009 and 2012 for funding at the anticipation the rail line would be abandoned but it has not been abandoned yet. Funding does need to be delayed on the project and push the project back to 2012 and 2013. If the corridor is abandoned now, still would need time to prepare the project.

Robbie Perkins noted all the project are visionary and will have impact on transportation system in the future. Noted PART's increase in ridership and the next step will be to connect all the local systems together for customer efficiency.

Johnson inquired about discussions around increase in rail traffic.

Meyer noted that state is currently working towards it with upgrading rail lines between Raleigh and Charlotte. Johnson requested information from Meyer regarding NCDOT's efforts.

Robbie Perkins inquired about the matches for the STP DA funds.

Fischer noted the match for GTA would need to come from their operations funds, PART is providing their match, and the sidewalks would be from the available bond funds.

Robbie Perkins noted the strategic importance of the existing GTA site for downtown development.

Meyer noted the MPO had coordinated with NCDOT on the feasibility of applying the STP DA funds to the recommended projects.

Fischer noted that Doug Galyon is in favor of the recommendations.

Yvonne Johnson moved for approval. Mike Winstead seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the STP DA project recommendations.

Business / Potential Action Items

I. Transportation Bond Update

Adam Fischer stated the status of the 2000 bond updates. Noted that there \$15 million in bond funds that are available and already been issued. Three major projects that will get under way in 2009 is the Hornaday Road project with a partnership with NCDOT. They are building a bridge across the Urban Loop to connect Chimney Rock and Hornaday Road. The city's portion is to build the actual roadway portion which will total around \$4 million. The second big project is New Garden Road Phase Two which will span from Jefferson Road to Brassfield Road which is another \$4 million project which will get underway next year. The other project is the Battleground Rail Trail which will be \$6 million dollars which will get started next year. There is another \$15 million that still needs to be authorized for the 2000 bonds and that will be delayed to the fall of 2010.

Yvonne Johnson confirmed that the department will not touch the recent bonds until the economy improves.

Fischer concurs and notes that finance stated that some of the debt will soon be retired. This would allow for new debt to be picked up without affecting the tax rate. With that \$15 million the city would be able to finish Creek Ridge Road, Lake Jeanette Road, and Merritt Drive. These projects would be the remainder of the 2000 Bond and the projects could get started in the summer of 2010.

Perkins noted we need to analyze the ability to build these roads because of the price competition in the market place versus the ability of the city to service the debt. Mike Mills was interviewed by Fox and should to get a copy of that and play it for elected officials because of the excellent job done. There are projects all over the state and the engineering estimate was \$70 million and the bids came in to \$58 million. He noted that he has not seen that type of competitive market place in seven to ten years.

Fischer added that for the new signal system, the bids were under 15% percent than what the DOT was estimating.

Perkins further noted that can pay a lot of interest at 3% on that kind of capital cost reduction and the taxpayers would understand that buying cheaper would be justification for moving ahead. Get the better road system and the economic stimulus of getting the work done in tough times by local people, but you also can tie into interest rates that if you wait a long period of time will go up. The city can think that it will save money but it could cost large sums of money for the city and county.

Johnson is in support of saving all that the city can, but if the city does there needs to be a press conference for the public on why this is the best way to go and what the potential project cost increases would be if the city waits to sell the bonds.

Perkins noted the education is a large part of it.

2. Economic Stimulus Proposals

The federal discussions are focusing on infrastructure projects that are ready to go. Fischer explained that these are all projects that are ready to go in the next two years. When the funding becomes readily available these are ones that the city can apply funding for. There has been much talk about different packages, but there are some issues about how much and how long it will take to begin. A list of candidate projects has been provided. Many on the list are bond projects. The projects on the list total \$80 million over the next 2 years for highway, resurfacing, hybrid buses, or transit maintenance facility.

Most of the projects on the list for 2009 are ready to go to construction. Need to let legislative delegation know that more time is needed for the projects to be implemented.

Robbie Perkins noted the need to make sure the list included enough projects.

Fischer stated that there were still issues with funding the northern and eastern loop and it could be an option.

Perkins noted that importance of the local, state, and federal representatives being on the same page.

3. Legislative Update

Meyer noted the 21st Century Transportation Committee is still meeting. The final report will be complete at the end of the year. Staff will present the recommendations during the January meeting.

4. LRTP and Air Quality Update

Lydia McIntyre noted that the MPO expected to bring both documents to approval. The Air Quality Analysis had some issues regarding PM 2.5 regulations. This required additional work and a delay in the process. Most notably we have to go back out for public review with the Air Quality Report on December 15th which would run through January 13th and bring back both documents in January for approval.

5. Transportation Project Updates

Craig McKinney noted that he had recently received plans for the U-2412 (Vickrey Chapel Road to Hilltop Road) the Greensboro portion of the High Point Road projects. There will be a final design field inspection next week with NCDOT, the only issue is the lack of sidewalks being shown but will be corrected after this meeting.

Attended a meeting in Raleigh about the initial step beginning the study process improving US 70 between Greensboro and Burlington. NCDOT is currently developing a request to go out to consultants for proposals to conduct the study. Additional information to be presented at a future meeting.

Robbie Perkins asked McKinney to keep Kirk Perkins informed on the study developments. McKinney recommended that Kirk Perkins send a letter to NCDOT to encouraging progress on the project.

GDOT is to meet soon with NC Rail Division and their consultant to go over comments from the October public meeting on the proposed Pine Street Crossing Closure. NCDOT received alternative alignment from Heath Park Area Neighborhood Association.

Robbie Perkins recommended that Goldie Well and T.D. Bellamy-Small be informed of project developments.

6. MPO strategic topics

Meyer noted the January meeting will be on the 28th.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

None

2. Regional Transportation News

Brent McKinney thanked the MPO for the funds for the PART bus. This adds the total to seven out of ten buses needed. Winston Salem provided the eighth bus.

3. Wrap-Up

Robbie Perkins adjourned the meeting at 3pm.